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Bennett Delivers His 'Happy' Budget

By ALEC MERRIMAN

Premier Bennett yesterday delivered his 1959-60 "happy" budget speech which showed British Columbia will be clear of its net debt this year.

Spectator galleries were crowded as the premier, at 3.10 p.m., began explaining how his government planned to spend $300,401,394 in the year which begins April 1, surpassing even the record-high spending of $284,000,000 in the current fiscal year.

It took him two hours to deliver his speech and half-way through his voice began getting hoarse. He sipped grapefruit juice three times during his address, but confided later that he drinks apple juice all the time at home.

As in every year, the delivery of the budget is a special occasion in the House. All the male members wore hyacinth boutonnieres, but the women MLAs had ideas of their own. Mrs. Buda Brown chose gardenias and Mrs. Lois Haggen, violets.

Most of the members were on their best behavior. But three Socred members nodded and dozed.

The new budget provides for payment during the year of the last supplementary payments for debt reduction, amounting to $12,250,000.

The premier didn't say at what time in the year the province will actually be free of debt, but observers believe the big announcement will come on Aug. 2, seventh anniversary of Social Credit's election as the government of British Columbia.

It is thought likely province-wide debt-burning celebrations will be organized.

The $12,500,000 for clearing the net debt will be taken from the revenue surplus account which the public accounts, tabled in the legislature Jan. 22, showed was $13,228,822, the lowest it has been for years.

Government members were loud in their applause and thumped the tops of their desks at least 10 times during the address as the premier made an appealing point.

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Forecast: snow flurries, colder
(Details on page 2)

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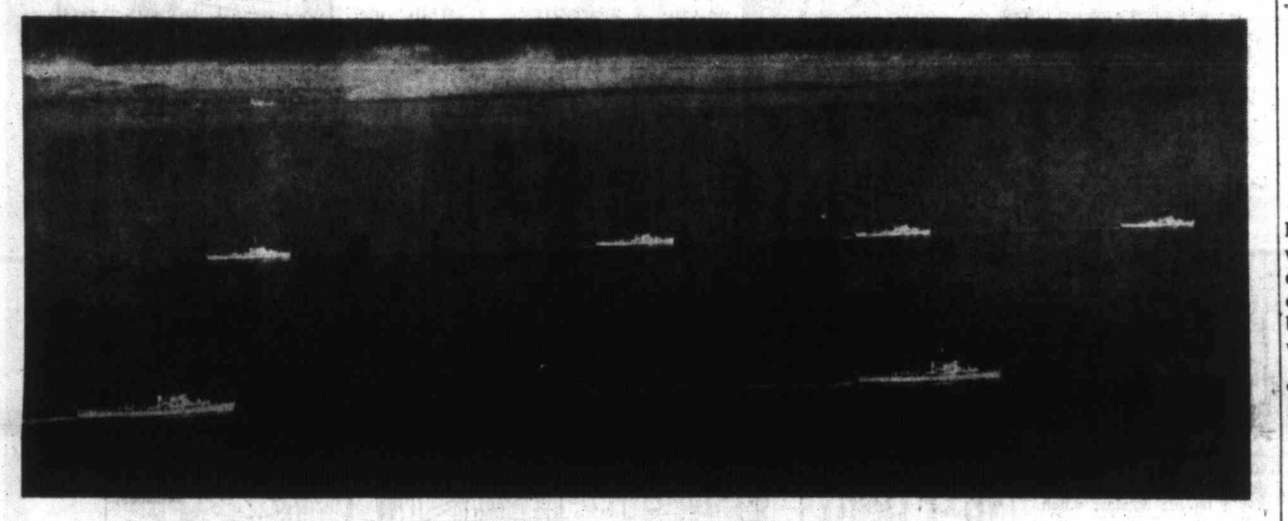
CPR ACTION SHOCKS HOUSE
U.S. FERRIES HELP FILL GAP



Home Port in Sight for Big Frigate Squadron

Largest one-class Royal Canadian Navy squadron to sail together in peace time steamed up Juan de Fuca Strait yesterday morning for home berths at Esquimalt. Six of eight frigates are shown here. Sussexvale, Antigonish, Stettler and Beacon Hill returned from month training cruise to Hawaii. Jonquiere, New Waterford and New Glasgow completed operational assignments in northern B.C. waters. Ste. Therese—eighth frigate in 4th Canadian Escort Squadron—joined them Thursday.—(RCN photo.)

Ottawa Action Urged

News of the CPR's "callous indifference to public welfare" hit a budget-drowsy legislature yesterday like the nerve-splitting blast of a close-up ship's whistle.

Proposed scrapping Feb. 25 of Vancouver-Victoria-Seattle ferry service was announced by Works Minister W. N. Chant immediately following the dry, two-hour reading of the budget speech.

UNITED FOR ONCE

Shocked members, solidly united for once, lost no time in unanimously endorsing Mr. Chant's move to ask for federal intervention to keep the ferries running.

Premier Bennett later said he will be in touch with Ottawa this weekend to find out the story of the CPR withdrawal.

WORKING LATE

Attorney-General Robert Bonner, who moved debate on the matter be adjourned to Monday, said "I'll be burning the midnight oil to come up with a solution."

"The terms of the union may be the answer," he said. (Certain promises were made by the federal government when Crown Colony of Vancouver Island united with Canada.)

TERRIBLY SHORT

In making the announcement, Works Minister Chant said: "This move was not entirely unexpected but it is such terribly short notice.

"It shows a callous indifference to public welfare," he said.

NO EXCUSE

"Just because they are taking a loss is no excuse. It should be balanced off in their overall operations."

Mr. Chant said "It is a well-known fact that Crown grants and rights have yielded them hundreds of millions of dollars.

"It is hitting below the belt before we get our own ferries in service.

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HON. W. N. CHANT
". . . callous indifference"

★ ★ ★

As of Feb. 25

Triangle Dropped By CPR

News of the almost immediate cessation of CPR winter ferry service between Victoria and the mainland pulled the mat from under the city yesterday and left it scrambling for a new footing.

Termination of the 49-year-old direct steamship service between Vancouver, Victoria—and Seattle—will become effective after sailings of Feb. 25, said J. N. Fraine, vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co.'s Pacific region.

Summer service will be on a once-a-day basis and the time-

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See stories on Page 13.

Sidney Service To Help

Immediate sequel to the decision of the Canadian Pacific Railway to withdraw its winter service between Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle came last night when Washington State Ferries announced it would step into the breach.

WSF will put its Anacortes-Sidney ferry into operation Feb. 25, and Bud Birss, general manager of the service, told Victoria authorities the service would henceforth be put on a year-round basis.

OFF IN WINTER

Hitherto, WSF has discontinued its service during the winter months.

Mr. Birss said a year-round service would be possible because of the new docking facilities being constructed at Sidney, and also because WSF is building a large ferry for the job.

MONTH EARLIER

In addition, Mr. Birss said that this year WSF would commence its Port Angeles-Victoria run a month earlier than usual. Starting date will be about the end of April, when the CPR normally puts on its Victoria-Port Angeles service.

In the fall, the service will continue as long as the licence holds good for the Kalakala.

NEW SHIP

"By that time, we hope that the new ship being built by Black Ball Ferry for an all-round Port Angeles-Victoria service will be ready," he said.

George I. Warren, manager of the Victoria and Island Publicity Bureau, said that the move by the WSF had saved the day for Victoria.

"It looks as if we are going to have a better-than-ever service between Vancouver Island and the U.S. mainland," he said.

Main objection last night to the CPR's abrupt action in terminating its service seemed to be withdrawal of the overnight crossing between Vancouver and Victoria.

LEISURELY STYLE

Popular with businessmen and others, the Princess Joan and the Princess Elizabeth enabled people to make the inter-city journey in leisurely style.

The alternative offered by the CPR is by Nanaimo. The last boat leaves Vancouver for Nanaimo at 11.59 and arrives at Nanaimo at 2.30 a.m.

The last boat from Nanaimo to Vancouver is at 1 a.m. It arrives in the mainland city at 3.30 a.m.

Inquiry at the various travel agencies in the city disclosed no immediate prospect of public transportation being available for Victoria passengers using these late boats at Nanaimo.

G. Conway Parrott, general manager of Vancouver Island Coach Lines, said his company would get to work to revise its bus schedules between Victoria and Nanaimo.

Already there is an express service connecting with most of the CPR ferries.

CPR officials said they had no notification of any change in the E and N schedule between Victoria and Nanaimo.

Budget In Brief

The province by March 31, 1960, will have fully liquidated its direct debt and by so doing will have $25,000,000 more annually to release for current services.

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Direct and indirect grants to municipalities and municipal taxpayers have been increased by $9,400,000 to a total of $72,046,000.

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Aggregate expenditures will be $300,490,000, biggest in B.C. history, and revenues will be $300,375,000 — $287,775,000 (up

For further details see Page 10.

$20,300,000 from the current year) from current revenues and $12,600,000 appropriated from revenue surplus accruals.

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No changes in taxes—no increases and no decreases.

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No mention of an expected increase in the $28 home owners' grant.

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B.C. Power Commission's borrowing powers will be up $50,000,000 to provide for future public power developments.

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Borrowing powers of the PGE Railway will be increased by $10,000,000 to $120,000,000 for improvements to handle increased traffic.

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Estimated B.C. revenue from federal tax-rental payment is $65,939,104.18.

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Provision has been made for $1,500,000 for a salary increase to civil servants.

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Mental health services costs will be increased by $1,153,647.

Province to Help with Fees To Put B.C. Students on Top

A provincial government plan "to put our students in the forefront of the world and to catch up and maybe pass Russia," was announced yesterday by Premier W. A. C. Bennett.

The premier interrupted the reading of his two-hour budget speech to make the announcement, which included the following points, both applicable this fall:

1. The government will pay one-half the fees of all first-class students, and one-third the fees of the highest 2,000 students receiving second-class training.

2. A student aid loan fund of up to $2,000,000 will be established.

The premier said the fees-splitting program "is to encourage scholarship, and to assist our ablest students in senior matriculation, University of British Columbia and Victoria College.

"And the expanded loan and bursary plan will ensure that no student will be denied a university training for financial reasons."

Later, in his office, the premier was asked if the plan was aimed at helping the West catch up to Russia on an educational level.

"To catch up — or pass them," he said.

"We want our students to study so they'll be in the forefront of the world."

Mr. Bennett described the program as "not only unique

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Snowfall Melts Quickly

Snow mixed with rain was reported falling in the Greater Victoria area at 12.30 a.m. today, but it melted as fast as it fell.

At the same time, it was snowing hard along Patricia Bay Highway, about ½-inch of snow remained on the ground in the Colwood area and snow was falling along the Malahat.

CBC Strike

Meetings Go On Today

OTTAWA (CP) — Negotiations between the CBC management and striking French-language television producers in Montreal were adjourned here until Saturday morning.

In the Commons, Revenue Minister Nowlan described the strike as the "most unfortunate and unnecessary episode" in Canadian labor history.

He said the dispute between the producers and CBC management in Montreal could easily have been settled in 30 minutes if no strike had been called and if the matter had been brought to the attention of CBC headquarters in Ottawa last December.

Canada Finds Riches Beyond Arctic Circle

NEW YORK (UPI)—Canada is probing for oil and other resources far beyond the Arctic Circle and getting "a marked degree of success," Transport Minister George Hees said last night.

He said the exploration program was being pushed ahead even "though this country's productive capacity "is much greater than current demand."

"Our search for additional resources has not been deterred, either by a temporary lack of demand or rigorous climatic conditions," he told the Canadian Society of New York.

"Private enterprise has extended its search for oil and gas far beyond the boundaries normally considered settled or accessible areas, and is at present probing beyond the Arctic Circle, with a marked degree of success."

Hees said the weather in northern Canada no longer presents an insurmountable barrier to accessibility of rich resources. He said Canadians know they exist, and require only to be confirmed in commercial quantities that will permit their development by private enterprise.

To make it possible to get at the resources, he said, the Canadian government is building airfields and harbors throughout the far north and converting military airports to commercial use.

Malan Dies In Capetown

CAPETOWN, South Africa (AP)—Former South African prime minister Daniel Malan died early today in Capetown. He was 84 years old and had been seriously ill. Malan served as South Africa's prime minister from 1948 to 1954 and was the author of much of the nation's racial legislation.

Don't Miss

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United Church Head Arrives Here Today
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Cougars Surprise Vancouver, 4-1
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Mixed-Up Lovers 'Want to Be Alone'
(Names in News, Page 11)

Like Your Job Or Leave It
(Lelord Kordel, Page 15)

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Always Open Season For Queen's Critics
(Page 25)

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